

Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

Volume 39 Number 3

January 1973

EAGLES - EAGLES - EAGLES

Again the St. Louis Audubon Society has been asked to participate in the Mississippi Valley Winter Bald Eagle Count. This will be the 7th time we have taken part.

The date is Saturday, February 17th, and the area is from Winfield Dam, north to Saverton.

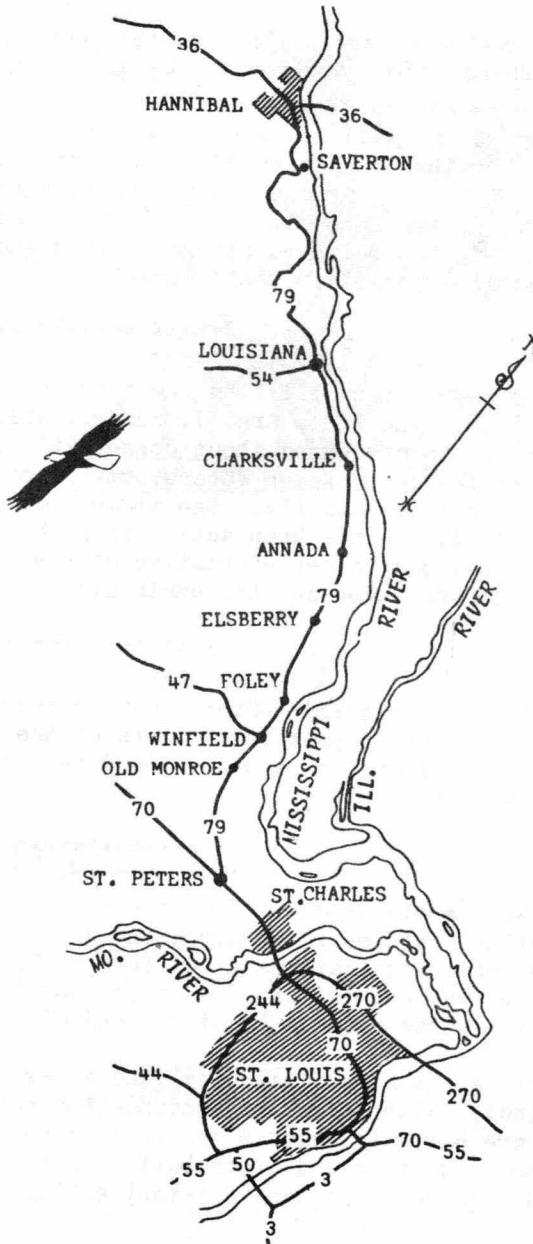
Last year 200 "birders" braved the cold on February 20th and the official count was 96 eagles, 60 adult, 29 immature and 7 unknown. Again we have the able leadership of McCune Dudley and Gus Artus of Louisiana and Earl Hath, President of the Society. They will map the area and different groups will cover specified areas.

The meeting place will be the plant of "Kamp Togs" in Clarksville, Missouri at 8:00 A.M. Clarksville is 1½ hours drive from the Clayton Court House. It is reached by following Interstate 70 to St. Peters. Then north on Route 79 to Clarksville. "Kamps Togs" is on the left-hand side entering Clarksville from the south. Coffee and doughnuts will await you at "Kamp Togs".

COME ONE - COME ALL!

For further information, call St. Louis Audubon Society; 965-8642.

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1973 AND BEYOND

One of the privileges of being an editor is that one can communicate with a great many people. Our January printing is 2000 bulletins. With luck at least half of these will be read through, and some of them will have more than one reader. We don't have 2000 members as yet, but our membership is growing constantly. With this issue we welcome 33 new members, whose names are printed on the following page.* With the new location for the Wildlife Films at the Ethical Society, our audience has more than doubled. This is another way in which the Audubon message comes to increasing numbers of people.

As 1973 begins we are exploring still more avenues of involvement. At the November meeting of the Board it was decided to try an experiment: a double-barreled membership meeting. We will have as our guest Ron Klataske who is the Regional Representative of the National Audubon Society. He will be here to answer your questions and to hear any suggestions (or criticism) about the activities of the Society, both local and national. We shall also have the privilege of seeing an excellent slide program produced by one of our own members, Warren Lammert. Mr. Lammert describes himself as "a former duck hunter turned nature photographer", but as anyone who has followed his activities knows, he is far more than that. The meeting will be at the Ethical Society. Don't miss it!

More. On page 5 you will find the first of a series of articles by another one of our members, Betty Wilson. The name, Mrs. J. Russell Wilson, is another name which should be familiar to everyone who is concerned about conservation, especially in Missouri. A long time board member of the League of Women Voters, both local and state, her particular field of interest has been environmental quality. She spearheaded the successful campaign for the water pollution bonds in 1971. She has been active in pushing environmental legislation through the General Assembly, usually as a representative of the League. Her articles will deal with issues in the field of conservation and the environment.

More. Anyone for trips? Other Audubon groups have found a wide response among their membership for birding trips to many parts of the world. We have sponsored trips in Missouri, and are wondering what the response would be for more such trips, perhaps farther afield. See the announcement on page 7.

More. We are always delighted to hear from our readers. Mrs. Dale Tettenhorst sent some very interesting articles about migrating sandhill and whooping cranes in Kansas. We also received a number of communications about Burrell Pickering's articles on bluebird nesting at Sunny Ranch. We welcome letters, and also contributions for the Bulletin. They should be sent to the editor whose address is at the end of this Bulletin.

Which brings us to a final item (and a New Year's Resolution - shorter comments by the editor next time!) With regret we announce the retirement of Mildred Reese as Executive Secretary, but we are happy to welcome her replacement, Bonna Rice (Mrs. Jay Rice). She will also help with the production and distribution of the Bulletin. We also welcome Katherine Chambers (Mrs. Gerome Chambers) as assistant editor and typist. M.C.W.

*We are dependent on National Audubon for membership lists, and there is considerable time lag. Undoubtedly there are people who have joined whose names we haven't received as yet. If you know of anyone who should be receiving the Bulletin but isn't, please communicate with Mrs. Rice. Changes in address or marital status should also be sent to her.

MISSOURI WILDFLOWER BOOK

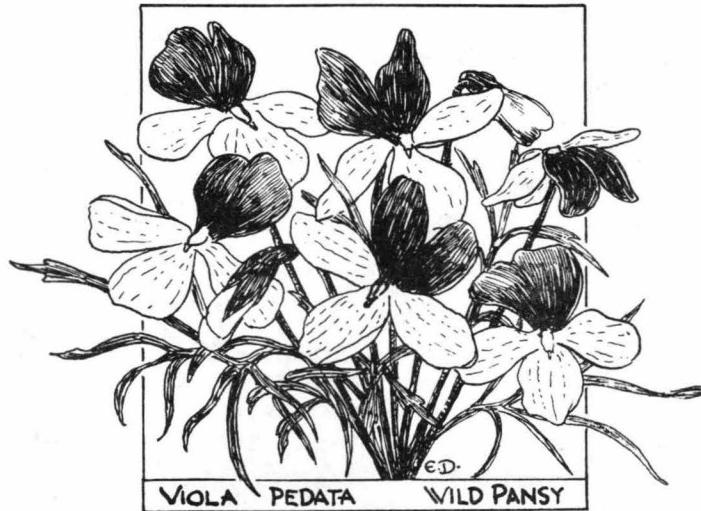
The Missouri Department of Conservation has published a much needed book on the Wildflowers of Missouri, which was written by our Board member Edgar Denison. The book is designed for both beginners and more advanced students of flower identification.

There are 250 colored photographs, all but 8 taken by Edgar. These are arranged by colors and within colors by approximate blooming time. Thus, the novice should be able to find his posy by perusing the color sections. Opposite each picture appear the common and botanical names of the plant, the plant family involved, the surroundings in which it can be found, the flowering season and a reference page number. This reference page number leads to a botanically arranged text, describing the plants pictured plus 150 others which are closely related.

Besides this information, there are short articles on the flora of Missouri in general, and on photography. There is also a pictorial presentation of flower parts and leaf shapes, margins and configurations.

This book is the first to offer colored pictures of our Missouri flora, and fits well into the ever increasing educational efforts of our Missouri Department of Conservation. On Edgar's part it is the result of a longstanding interest in the Missouri out-of-doors and was undertaken as a contribution to the cause of conservation. Any profits will go to further the work of the Department in this field.

The price is \$4.00. Copies are obtainable from the Conservation Department, P.O.Box 180, Jefferson City Mo. 65101. If a group of readers wants to order copies, Edgar has offered to obtain them, IF you will pick them up at his home, 544 East Adams, Kirkwood, Mo.



NEXT AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM MARCH SECOND

Steve Maslowski will present Kentucky Out-of-Doors. He is carrying on the Maslowski family tradition of filming the varied aspects of wildlife in the beautiful Bluegrass State. This latest film features vignettes of wildness that include a red fox's hunt for a meadow vole, nesting barn owls, and the death-feigning of a hognose snake. The showing will be at 8:15 P.M. on Friday, March 2 at the Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road.

Welcome to New Members

Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Brune
Mrs. Elma T. Chapman
Mr. Sidney S. Cohen
Myra Copeland
Dr. and Mrs. W. M. Cowan
Janice L. Crossland
Mr. And Mrs. Robert A. Emmett
Mr. R. W. Erickson
Sherry Fink
Mr. Hugh L. Fry, Jr.
Mrs. Betty Goebel
Virginia W. Hamilton
Holstrom Family
Margaret Kaiser
Dr. Barry F. King
Jay Knapp
P. Kohler

Miss Bonnie Lane
James and Barbara Law
Mr. A. J. Luedlaff
Mr. W. Finley McElroy
Mr. Lewis A. Nieman
Mr. and Mrs. Harold B. Norman
Mrs. Frank Simms
Dr. and Mrs. W. F. Simms, Jr.
Mrs. Rollyn G. Smith
Mrs. Carl H. Sparenberg
Elwes S. Starr
Mr. Kelly Stockstrom
Dr. Helen Thornton
Mr. Fred O. Urban
Ms. Jane L. Volk
Mrs. Laverne N. Williamson

SPECIAL EVENT

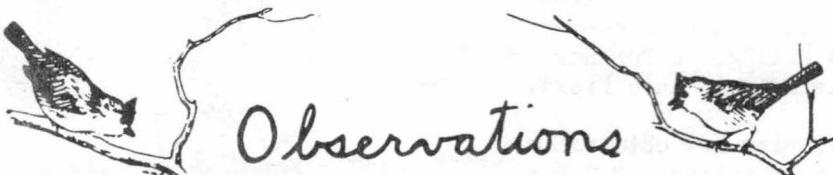
Thursday, February 8, 1973, the St. Louis Audubon Society will inaugurate a series of special programs.

The first will be held at the Ethical Society Auditorium, 9001 Clayton Rd. Warren Lammert will present a slide program:

"VIGNETTES OF NATURE"

- #1. "A Hunter's Enjoyment of Nature"
- #2. "Nature and the City Dweller"
- #3. "An Appreciation of Florida Wildlife"
- #4. "Four Seasons in Missouri"

Ron Klataske, Regional Representative of The National Audubon Society, will be the featured speaker. The program will start at 8:15 p.m.



J. Earl Comfort

A review of the St. Louis area 1972 birding within a radius of fifty miles of the city shows many interesting highlights. It involved many pleasant hours in the field where birding shared the honors with botanizing and other related nature study pursuits. The composite total of 283 species as of December 15th is an excellent achievement. No subspecies were counted. The 1971 total was 277.

The warbler family led with 37 kinds, one more than our usual total. It was an area record. There were 33 members of the big finch family represented. The 29 species of shorebirds were the result of some exciting birding and an excellent total considering the fact that 1972 was one of our worst shorebirding years. The 24 kinds of ducks set a year record with two more than our average. The 19 kinds of hawks and their allies was a total above average. These five families represented more than half of our year's total.

Probably the 10 best birds in the A.O.U. checklist order were redthroated loon, reddish egret, surf scoter, common scoter, Swainson's hawk, laughing gull, black-legged kittiwake, scissortail flycatcher, vermillion flycatcher and Swainson's warbler. Some other rare to fairly rare species were eared grebe, whistling swan, oldsquaw duck, white-winged scoter, black vulture, Mississippi kite, goshawk, Harlan's hawk, golden eagle, pigeon hawk, willet, Hudsonian godwit, American avocet, Iceland gull, snowy owl, saw-whet owl, fish crow, blackthroated blue warbler, yellow-headed blackbird, evening grosbeak, common redpoll and white-winged crossbill. There were many other species that nearly fit this category.

There was a toss up for the bird of the year between the reddish egret and Swainson's warbler. The areas that were banded the most were the August A. Busch Wildlife Area in St. Charles County and the Shaw's Garden Arboretum in Franklin County. The St. Louis Audubon Society held regular monthly nature hikes at the Arboretum, while the WGNSS favored Busch.

Because of the deadline for the next Audubon "Bulletin" this report doesn't cover the entire year. In a later issue there will appear a surprisingly large list of people who saw 200 or more different birds in our area, plus any 1972 additional bird species that may show up.

There will also be a summary of the three Christmas counts. All the results were not received in time for this issue.



Focus on

The Environment



Betty Wilson

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WATER CLEAN-UP

Adequate federal funding for local waste treatment plants is being imperiled by presidential action. President Nixon vetoed the water pollution control act of 1972 because he felt it called for too much money. Congress responded by overriding his veto. The President then directed Mr. Ruckelshaus, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, to allot the states only \$2-billion out of the \$5-billion authorized by Congress for 1973 and \$3-billion out of \$6-billion authorized for 1974.

This cut in funds will have a devastating effect on Missouri's carefully planned program to aid local communities in constructing sewage treatment plants. Federal grants for Missouri were to have been \$80-million in 1973; the presidential directive reduces these grants to \$33-million. In 1974 Missouri's share would be reduced from nearly \$94-million (\$93,600,000) to \$49-million. Some states are protesting the President's decision. Audubon members are urged to write to our Governor and members of Congress to protest this decision.

An article in the Missouri Conservationist, December, 1972, Jim Auckley, "Putting the Finger on Polluters", states "The biggest polluters have been pinpointed; municipalities, mining operations, industry and agriculture--in that order. Add them up and all fouled over 790 miles of Missouri streams in one year..... The major problem is inadequate sewage treatment facilities at the small town level."

UPCOMING LEGISLATION (77th MISSOURI GENERAL ASSEMBLY)

Adequate appropriations for state environmental agencies are of primary importance.

Funds for the Clean Water Commission continue to be inadequate and conservationists hope that legislators can be convinced of the necessity of improved appropriations for this agency. It was at the last possible minute in September that the Legislature transferred about \$60,000 from the funds accumulated in the Clean Water Fund which allowed the Commission to obtain Federal funds for administrative purposes. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act requires that the state extend or improve its program. Therefore, increased appropriations are imperative.

The Air Conservation Commission has also received reduced funding from General Revenue. The appropriation for 1971-72 was \$149,366; for 1972-73 it was \$143,312 (a reduction of about \$6000, although the Commission requested \$247,346)

There is need for legislation providing for certification of water and waste plant operators. Such a bill was introduced in the 76th General Assembly but made no progress. The mandatory certification programs are designed to improve water and waste treatment plant operations and raise employee stature. The public health is literally in the hands of the water and waste water treatment operator and often he does not have proper training for his job.

DESIGN FOR CONSERVATION

Constitutional funding of the Design for Conservation failed to get on the November ballot for technical reasons, despite an overwhelming response to the petition drive. The Citizens Committee for Conservation, which has backed the soft drink tax, is reviewing various means of securing the funds which are so vitally necessary if Missouri is not to fall far behind in the increasingly important work of conservation education and preservation of natural areas.

THE L-15 LEVEE AGAIN

Indications are that the Corps of Engineers is proceeding relentlessly with plans for building the L-15 levee around 37,000 acres of flood plain at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. The St. Louis Audubon Society is on record in opposition to this project which would mean a tragic loss to the open space and wildlife of the region. The January meeting of the Sierra Club will be devoted to a discussion of this vital issue. Audubon members are urged to attend the meeting at the County Library, 1940 S. Lindbergh, on Tuesday, January 23, at 7:30 P.M.

THE FRUSTATED KINGBIRD

Thomas H. Eliot

This is reprinted, with the permission of the author, from the Western Massachusetts Bird News. In that area Tom Eliot is identified as the younger brother of Sam Eliot who is the authority on the birds of the Connecticut Valley. To St. Louisans he is rather better known as the former Chancellor of Washington University. However, the fact that he is also an excellent birder, talented poet and wit, may come as a surprise to those who knew him only in his official capacity.

Oh an Eider Duck
Is a bird in luck
You can tell a queen from a king.
The female Quail
Heeds the call of her male
On the first soft night of spring.
Everyone knows that a Rooster crows
While his Hen just clucks and pecks.
But pity the Kingbird
The poor puzzled Kingbird
Nobody knows its sex.



The female Thrush
Gets an awful crush
On her sweetly singing mate.
'Neath the northern moon
The female Loon
Is preening for her date.
The poor young King-
Bird wants its fling,
But how can it even start
When you can't tell a female
You can't tell a male
You can't tell the two apart?



The male Meadowlark
Can strike a spark
In the female Meadowlark's breast.
The Mourning Dove
Gently croons of love
From a heterosexual nest.
But the Kingbird's life
Husband or wife?
Is vastly more complex.
Pity the Kingbird
The frustated Kingbird:
Nobody knows its sex!





THE RELUCTANT LOON

Earl H. Hath

Driving to St. Louis during a recent ice storm, Mrs. Rosselot of Kennet spotted a large bird on the roadside near De Soto on highway 55. On examination she found it to be an ice encumbered loon. Mrs. Rosselt placed the bird in her car and brought it to the Humane Society in St. Louis.

After the bird had been de-iced and given temporary shelter for several days Ken Karbel of the Society called me asking that I house and care for the loon until such a time as it could be released.

Knowing full well that loons are fish eaters and with no fresh fish available at this time of year it was necessary to buy frozen fish, thaw and dangle from a string to simulate a proper meal. After four days, the bird seemed in good physical condition- fully recovered from the ice and full of fish at 79¢ a pound- so I decided to release it. The decision brought on in part by the strange sounds coming from the loon headquarters at any and all hours.

The release was planned for open water on the river near Grafton, Illinois. On arrival the loon was taken from the carrying case and pointed in the direction of ducks diving in the water. But no amount of urging, pushing or coaxing could interest this bird in the great out of doors. The loon simply wailed for the comfort of warm quarters and well served meals. Recapturing the big bird on a 20 foot icy bank was no easy task, but finally covered with a coat the bird settled down- happy as a loon, and giving thanks with low weird yodeling.

In the best interest of the bird and peace in the neighborhood this loon is now residing at the St. Louis Zoo under the care of Charlie Hoesle to be released in the spring, hopefully no longer reluctant and ready to leave.

ARE YOU YEARNING FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

A train trip through the Barranca del Cobra in northern Mexico? Or a stay at the El Dorado Lodge bordering the Amazon Jungles in Colombia, South America? If you are, let us know, and with sufficient interest your Tour Committee will look into the possibility of organizing one or the other or perhaps both of these trips. Group arrangements are cheaper. Drop me a line or call Connie Hath, Chairman of the Tour Committee, at 965-8642. We hope the response will encourage us to start investigating immediately. Eleonora Nelson, P. O. Box 6, Godfrey, Illinois 62035. Telephone -(618) 466 - 6517

MISSISSIPPI CHANNELIZATION SURVEY

The Missouri Department of Conservation has forwarded a request for aid in the preparation of an impact statement on the effect of channelization of the Mississippi River by the Army Corps of Engineers. The specific area covered is the bluffs on both sides of the river between St. Louis and Cairo, Illinois. The effect on plants, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrate animals and birds will be included in the survey. Any readers who feel they could contribute information should contact: Mrs. Virginia Terpening, Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory, Southern Illinois University, 806½ S. Marion, Carbondale, Illinois 62901.

MERAMEC PARK DAM AND BIRD HABITAT

Below is a statement about the proposed Meramec Park Dam prepared by Edgar Denison in response to a request from the Army Corps of Engineers. As you may have read, the Sierra Club has sued to force the Corps to file a valid environmental impact statement before the work can proceed. The statement follows:

The Meramec Park Lake, proposed by the Corps of Engineers, would inundate portions of the Meramec, Huzzah, and Courtois rivers as well as Springs and Brazil creeks, and a great number of valleys and ravines leading to these water courses. The combined linear extension of involved bottom lands is well over 60 miles.

The river and creek bottoms are by nature covered with typical flood-plains woods, and even where agriculture has removed portions there remains almost always at least a strip of wooded land along the waterways. Such bottom land woods are an essential, irreplaceable habitat for large quantities of birds of many species. No other habitat in Missouri is so extensively and intensively used by the bird population.

In Spring the leaves of the trees emerge earlier than in more exposed habitats, causing a parallel earlier abundance of caterpillars which form the prime food supply for migratory warblers, kinglets and vireos. We count about 35 species of warblers during migration through Missouri and their overwhelming majority seek and frequent river bottom woods in their itinerary.

In Summer some 15 species of warblers nest in Missouri, and again, the preferred habitat for most species is creek and river bottom. Other important birds in this nesting habitat are vireos, thrushes, catbird, and towhee. Our two largest owls, the horned and the barred, prefer bottom land nesting grounds.

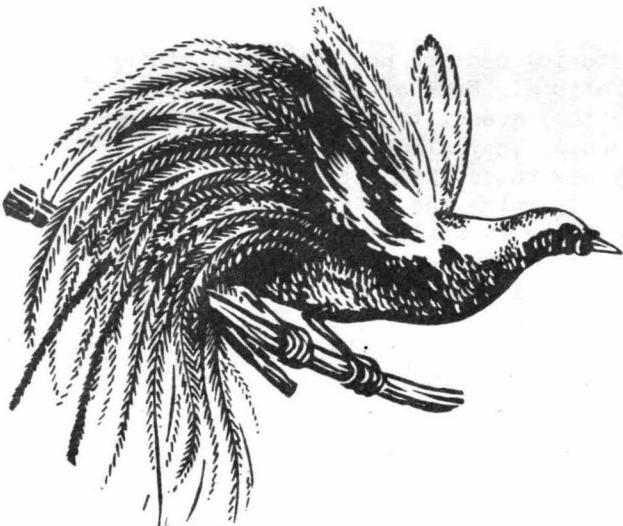
In Fall the fruits of trees and vines are of great importance to local and migratory birds. An abundance of vines, especially of the grape family, is typical of river bottom understory vegetation. The grapes are eaten by large numbers of birds, in fact, are an essential food source. Two dominant trees of the flood plain association, sycamore and hackberry, are very important food suppliers for birds. Sycamore seeds are relished by various members of the finches, such as purple and gold finches, while hackberry fruit is taken by a large segment of the bird population.

In winter groups of seasonally dispersed birds - cardinals, titmice, chickadees, nuthatches and juncos congregate, travelling together in mixed groups through river and creek bottom lands. Tens of thousands of robins and equally large numbers of members of the blackbird family seek shelter in the dense undergrowth of lowlands near watercourses where they are protected and where dense vegetation keeps the ground often free from snow and ice. Elimination of twice 60 miles of habitat - twice, because the woods are on both sides of the watercourses - would be disastrous to native and migratory birds.

Few projects are as ill conceived as the Meramec Park Lake. Certain interests, camouflaging as conservation-minded citizens, have much to gain financially from this lake. The claimed recreational benefits would be primarily for those who can afford powerboats and other sporting equipment. Those who are in dire need of access to nature and recreation, the inner-city dwellers of St. Louis, cannot afford round trips of 130 miles and more. At a time when we are becoming increasingly aware that the carbon fuels are running out, it is incredible to propose a recreational area so far from those whom it is supposed to benefit.

The flood control claims are untenable: the area to be protected is no bigger than the area to be destroyed. The economic justification is entirely missing. It is ridiculous to have the taxpayer underwrite flood protection for land which owes its fertility to the deposits of silt through floods. River bottom farming entails the risk of floods as a normal feature.

Last, but not least, from an ecological viewpoint the construction of Meramec Park Lake would be an act of VANDALISM with irreplaceable damage to the entire flora and fauna in general and birds in particular. The Meramec is one of the very few fairly unpolluted streams in these United States --- Let us preserve this heritage in its natural state.



REPORT FROM NEW GUINEA

Mary C. Wiese

This is the first of a series of excerpts from letters written by the editor to her husband during a six week trip to the South Pacific. She, and Bertha and Joel Massie, travelled with a group of twenty under the sponsorship of the World Nature Club. Letters on other segments of the trip to Fiji, New Hebrides, Solomon Islands and Australia are appearing in WGNSS

August 5, Lae, New Guinea

It's hard to believe we are actually in New Guinea, especially since Lae itself is so untypical of what one might have expected from books about New Guinea. The largest port on the northeast shore, it has a waterfront with beautiful flower-bordered esplanades. Wooded hillsides slope up steeply from the port area to the very attractive shopping district on the plateau above. There is a magnificent botanical garden combined with a military cemetery, beautifully landscaped. Most of the grave markers are for Australians and Indians. The poignant epitaphs tell of their deaths in the severe fighting which practically destroyed Lae in 1943. This destruction is one reason that the town is so lovely now since it was carefully planned when it was rebuilt.

Another feature of Lae is the rainfall which descends heavily each night, encouraging an extremely lush and varied vegetation. It clears off and is beautiful and sunny all day, although the clouds hang low over the mountains. It's really a neat system! One of the pleasures of the trip has been to see plants growing which have familiar names, but totally unfamiliar shapes: cocoa, breadfruit, kapok, pandanus, taro, sago, manioc. There are also many I can't begin to name, including one bean vine with huge aqua flowers. They look as if a florist had dyed them. (N.B. Later I learned that this is the Philippine Jade Vine, a cousin of the more common red one, called appropriately Flame of the Forest.)

Each morning we go very early to the botanical garden to look for birds. I can announce now that the trip is a success—we have seen a BIRD OF PARADISE—a Count Raggiano female which went into a nest as we watched. She's not as beautiful as the males (which are apt to be shot by the natives who use their plumage for headdresses,) but she is still pretty spectacular. We hope to see others of the nearly thirty species of birds of paradise, but there are many other unusual birds to be seen. Some examples are: two-eyed fig parrot, rufous underwing cuckoo shrike, midmountain mouse-babbler, grey gerygone warbler, blackheaded pitohui, modest honey eater, greater cinnamon-breasted wattlebird. How's that for a weird bunch of names?

Tomorrow we go southeast and up to about 5000 feet to one town called Bulolo and another called Wau (pronounced Wow). New Guinea has a huge land area but very few roads, and no trains at all. In many places it has made the jump literally from the Stone Age to the Air Age within our generation. It will be interesting to see what those empty looking mountains that we flew over look like from the ground.

August 7, Bulolo, New Guinea

Now we're at the Pine Lodge in Bulolo, after a ninety-mile trip over the mountains from Lae. It took all day because the road is narrow, rough and precipitous, and we made frequent bird-looking stops. This road and the settlements here are classic examples of how a country is opened up.

Until the 1920's this whole area was just as unpenetrated as the rest of the country away from the coastal fringe. Then a prospector named Michael Leahy discovered gold in some of the rivers here, and almost got himself killed by the distinctly unwelcoming Kukukukus, who felt no need of being discovered. But the rush was on and men found ways to get over the mountains, and come to terms with the natives. Close behind came the church, and with World War II, the military. The Australian Army Engineers actually built the road in 1943-1944 after pushing the Japanese out of Lae. (I've learned that there are nearly 3000 graves in that cemetery in Lae.) Now the gold has played out, but there are piles of tailings and waterfilled mine holes all along the streams we followed.

Bulolo, at 2500 feet, and Wau at nearly 5000, are lumbering centers now. The gold mining has almost ceased, except for a few small native operations. Most of the forest is now second growth planted trees, so-called pine. Actually they aren't true pine, but very ~~are~~ strange looking evergreen species called Klinki and Hoope. They almost appear to have been cut in topiary shapes. I know now why we occasionally saw roads which appeared to lead nowhere, as we flew over the mountains. These are the roads which the heavy log trucks use — and so do we. We follow them way up to the tops where there is still uncut forest, and where we find all manner of delightful birds. I've now seen seven-eighths of a male bird of paradise, and this morning we saw a pair of fawn-breasted bower birds, members of another unique bird family which build huge structures of grass or reeds decorated with stones or shells, or, these days, plastic. This is the male's method of luring a lady since his looks are rather plain. They don't nest there, but he hangs around it and redecorates from time to time, blue being his favorite color.

Before I leave the subject of forests I want to add another bit about trees. I've seen two more whose names are very familiar, teak and betel. The teak grows tall and straight, looking like a giant telegraph pole with huge leaves seeming to grow right out of the trunk. Betel is a palm with a bamboo looking trunk and clusters of small nuts under the twisted tops. I was particularly glad to see the betel trees. Everywhere we had seen red stains on the ground and I had assumed that half the population must have cut feet until I associated the stains with bright red teeth and realized what had caused them.

9 A.M., August 10, Wau, New Guinea

I'm snatching a few minutes to write before we go off for the day. There's a charming sound coming in through my window, lusty singing of "Picking up paw-paws, put 'em in your pocket". I can't think of a more suitable song for South Pacific school children, even though the original fruit of the song was no relation to the fruit we have for breakfast each morning. Now they're singing "Laugh Kookabura", having just finished the much less suitable "Polly Wolly Doodle". Out of another window I just watched a plane land, which reminds me about the unusual Wau airport. It's on a hillside and the runway is of necessity very short since there's no flat land. The hill helps slow the landing planes, one hopes. The airport was built by the military, and was the scene of a big battle in World War II.

9 P.M., August 10, Wau, New Guinea

Now I can tell you about Wau and today's trip. Wau is in a bowl shaped valley, completely surrounded by mountains. In order to get here yesterday we had to cling to the sides of the Snake River gorge. The name of the river tells the story. All roads in this area are one lane, gravel, built for the military, for gold-seeking or for lumbering. The Snake was heavily dredged for gold, and in several places we saw huge rusted dredges, now unused, which, during the thirties had been flown in over the mountains, piece by piece. Also, incidentally, we passed one of those sad sights of primitive countries, the little procession walking down the roadside, carrying the tiny coffin. This one had a bunch of garden flowers and some cloth arranged as a cross. No priest in sight.

For today's trip we went out the other side of town to the Edie Creek road which goes zig-zag up Mt. Kaindi, at one time for more gold. Now it is used primarily by the forestry people and intrepid tourists. This is the first mountain drive on which I've been really quite nervous. The road was so narrow and the bus seemed to lean toward the gorge on the curves. When I looked out, there was no apparent road, only sheer drop, and the town seemingly miles and miles below. It was very beautiful, with many side creeks tumbling down the mountain, and the tremendously tall trees, sometimes towering above us, sometimes as treetops below.

There were many lovely flowers, including orchids on the trees, but also plain old lantana and ageratum, a very large-flowered impatiens, and a beautiful orange lily, much like our blackberry lily. There was also a combination raspberry-strawberry which we ate and which has not proved lethal, only rather insipid. One more comment on the road: when it seems as though the whole thing will drop into the abyss below they shore it up with a mass of round boulders held in place with chicken wire, thus reinforcing it and extending the shoulder. They apparently use little concrete since we saw the same technique for abutments on a bridge under construction. Except for the highway bridges, all the local bridges are narrow swaying suspension affairs, made of the forest lianas which drape all the trees like hundred-foot grape vines.

If I sound as though I didn't enjoy the day, that's not true. I did, very much. I got over my uneasiness after a while and we didn't go all the way to the top anyway. We met a forester in a flatbed truck at about 6500 feet, who told us that the bus really couldn't make it. So guess what we do? Tomorrow we go up as far as we can in the bus and a workman will meet us and take us the last four miles in the back of the truck. We're being persistent because the top is mist-moss forest and may have very special birds and plants. We've now seen nearly a hundred new species of birds in New Guinea.

And the butterflies! We are in a constant haze of them every time we come to a streambed as we walk the forest roads. The system is that the bus takes us to a likely spot; then we get out and walk and look for birds and the bus follows along an hour or so later. Today I saw the most beautiful butterfly of all a swallowtail with purple-mauve splotches on his blackbanded upper wings and iridescent green and blue splotches below. Incidentally we've not been bothered by bugs of any kind (except one chigger.) Our two entomologists, one of whom is Don Messersmith, the leader, have a ball catching things. Many are unclassified, they say, and I can understand why, with the profusion of everything. But no bites, fortunately. There was one red specimen with black spots that showed up near me one day when we were sitting in the middle of a dry streambed having lunch. Don told me that it was an assassin bug with a fearfully painful bite, but he wouldn't let me kill it because it has its niche, and besides it was walking away from me!

By an obvious bit of association I'm reminded of another incident. We have a zoo man along and he spent all night last night on a mountainside catching bats in mist nets for the Smithsonian. This morning our entomologists deparasitized them and our ex-missionary doctor examined their stomach contents - right after breakfast. Anything for science!

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE

Have you ever found an injured, sick or dead bird and wanted to do something about it but not known what? If you will call Martin Schweig at 361-4226 he may be able to find help for the injured birds. Dead birds can be used by the St. Louis Public School System for their mounted bird collection. Call Bill Brush at 865-2886. If you live in the county you may call Marshall Magner at 961-4588. Information about such birds is always of interest, especially if they are unusual species. Occasionally our only knowledge that a rare bird has been in the area came from reports of dead birds.

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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calendar



Saturday, January 20 and Sunday, January 28, 8:00 A.M. AUDUBON NATURE WALKS at Shaw's Garden Arboretum, Gray Summit, Missouri. Meet at Main Gate at 8:00 A.M. Arrangements can be made to meet at the Heritage House at Lindbergh and 66. Call Earl Hath, 965-8642. Also February 17 and 25.

Tuesday, January 23, 7:30 P.M. SIERRA CLUB MEETING, County Library, 1640 S. Lindbergh. Program on L-15 levee. See page 6.

Saturday, January 27, 8:00 A.M. MISSISSIPPI River AND ST. CHARLES COUNTY BIRDING. Meet at Creve Coeur Park concession stand.

Thursday, February 8, 8:15 P.M. ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY. Membership Meeting, Ethical Society 9001 Clayton Road. See page 4.

Friday, February 9, 8:15 P.M. WGNSS INDOOR NATURE ADVENTURE: A YEAR AT SUNNY RANCH, George and Millie Blaha, County Library, 1640 S. Lindbergh.

Saturday, February 10, 8:00 A.M. WGNSS BUSCH MONTHLY CENSUS. Meet at Headquarters Lake. Also March 10.

Saturday, February 17, 8:00 A.M. ANNUAL EAGLE COUNT. Louisiana, Missouri. See page 1.

Friday, March 2, 8:15 P.M. AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM: KENTUCKY OUT-OF-DOORS, Steve Maslowski, shown at Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road.

Friday, March 9, 8:00 P.M. WGNSS INDOOR NATURE ADVENTURE: EVOLUTION IN THE PLANT KINGDOM, Lillian Nagel and Peg Feigley, County Library, 1640 S. Lindbergh.

There will be birding trips each Wednesday and Thursday sponsored by the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. For information on the Wednesday trips call Sallie Phillips, 821-2216 or Dot Reger, 822-2058. For the Thursday trips call Helen Bowman, 531-1748 or Phoebe Snet-singer, 968-3442.

GOLDSMITH UPDATED — THE DESERTED NATION

(In fifty-three eagles' nests examined in Maine in 1965, only four eaglets were found. Charles M. Brookfield, ornithologist, ascribes the depletion of the eagle crop to sterility of one or both parent birds. Undeveloped eagles' eggs were examined and found to contain DDT, DDE, and other poisons)

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, along with spray.
Chemists and farmers flourish at their peril:
The bird of freedom, thanks to them, is sterile.
And a Bald Eagle, still its country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

E.B. White

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